

Want to learn more about careers in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) and how these fields are applied in the city of Scottsdale? Meet some of our STEM stars!

Principal Scientist Mark Xerxis

Drawn to the study of chemistry during his high school studies, principal scientist **Mark Xerxis** explains that it was there he became intrigued by compounds and test tubes. He remembers “oftentimes my experiments resulted in one big mess!” Mark even had a teacher caution him to never become a chemist. Undeterred, Mark went on to earn his B.S. in chemistry from Arizona State University. While Mark still loves to experiment with chemicals and instrumentation, he now does so at the city’s Advanced Water Treatment Facility, where his work ensures that residents get safe, clean and reliable drinking water. Mark has more than 20 years of experience in the field of environmental testing and water treatment and is a member of the American Chemical Society. His advice to future scientists is to never stop learning. “The field of science is exciting and ever-changing with new discoveries,” he says. “Keep educating yourself.”



E Librarian Marian Reisman

Meet information scientist **Marian Reisman** - the E librarian. Marian has been in the public library field for 11 years. When the “E” revolution started, Marian was at the forefront, evaluating and purchasing databases and teaching people how to locate and evaluate information on the Web. She now is in charge of electronic services at the Scottsdale Public Library. That means she knows all about anything that can be loaded onto a reader, including books, music and more.



Irrigation Systems Coordinator David Pratt

Technology drives the day in and day out activities of irrigation systems coordinator **David Pratt**. With 17 years of experience in horticulture, geology, xeriscape and environmental science, David know just what it takes to keep Scottsdale’s parks, medians and right-of-way areas attractive in ways that reduce the need for supplemental water from irrigation. He monitors the functionality of the city’s high-tech irrigation system, which is connected to 41 managed parks and facilities throughout Scottsdale. David is a Certified Turfgrass Professional, an Arizona Certified Landscape Professional and A+ certified. With David’s education and



experience, the city of Scottsdale consistently exceeds water conservation standards set by the Arizona Department of Water Resources.

Water Quality Laboratory Manager Laura McCasland

With almost 20 years of experience in the water and reclaimed water industry, Scientist Laura McCasland knows her way around an environmental lab. Laura recalls that her interest in science was sparked in junior high school, the first time she looked into a microscope at river water and “saw all the little creatures swimming around!” After obtaining a bachelor’s degree in microbiology with a minor in chemistry from the University of

Arizona, Laura began her career as an environmental microbiologist, testing various matrices for bacteria, protozoa and viruses. This experience led her to become the city’s water quality laboratory manager, where she supervises the work of chemists and microbiologist. Even today, Laura says “science still fascinates me.” Laura is vice-chair of the Multi-Agency Laboratory Association and a voting member of the Environmental Laboratory Advisory Committee. In addition, she serves as chairwoman for Water For People, a charity that raises money to provide safe water, sanitation and other essential services to less fortunate countries.

